



GARDNER-WEBB UNIVERSITY  
HUNT SCHOOL *of* NURSING

## The Role of Long-term Acute Care Hospitals (LTACHs) in Improving Outcomes for Patients with Necrotizing Pancreatitis

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IJEOMA ENWEANA MSN, RN, CVN

# LTACHs

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- ❖ Long Term Acute Care Hospitals (LTACHs) refers to care of the medically complex or critically ill patient generally requiring hospital stays of 25 days or more
  - ❖ Beyond general complex medical issues, the other two major categories that may require LTACH level of care include complex drains, wounds/burns and mechanical ventilation weaning.
  - ❖ Care is more acute and focused than in a Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) or Home Health services
  - ❖ Licensed as an Acute Care Hospital
  - ❖ Medicare certified
  - ❖ The Joint Commission (TJC) accredited

# Necrotizing Pancreatitis (NP)

- ❖ Necrotizing pancreatitis is a condition where parts of the pancreas die and may get infected. It is a complication of acute pancreatitis
- ❖ Necrotizing pancreatitis occurs when pancreatic tissue dies due to inflammation. When a patient has necrotizing pancreatitis, bacteria may spread into the dead tissue and cause an infection



# Treatment

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- ❖ A thin tube called a catheter is inserted into a patient abdomen to remove dead pancreatic tissue
- ❖ Open surgery may be required, if inserted catheter does not work





# Heptopancreatobiliary (HPB) Unit

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- ❖ Atrium Health has one of the largest HPB programs in the country
- ❖ HPB team work together with experts in other medical specialties to provide patients with specialized and complete care



# Problem Identification

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## ❖ **Background:**

- ❖ Necrotizing pancreatitis (NP), the more severe form, occurs as a complication in 20%–30% of patients with acute pancreatitis

## ❖ **Significance:**

- ❖ Over 70% of NP patients are readmitted within 30 days of discharge after abdominal surgery due to high infection rates and inadequate home health specialized care

# Needs Assessment

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- ❖ The Atrium Health HPB unit high readmission rates of NP patients have increased cost of care and decreased overall patient outcomes
- ❖ NP patients who are treated in the inpatient setting; however, in view of their high medical needs and acuity, cannot return to their homes or nursing homes
- ❖ Therefore, there is a need to transition patients with high level of care to an institution like LTACH that can accommodate their medical need

# Objectives and Goals

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## ❖ Objectives:

- ❖ Early identification of NP patients who will benefit from an LTACHs stay before discharge
- ❖ Educating staff on LTACHs Criteria for transfer
- ❖ Educating patient and family on the role of LTACH
- ❖ Partnering with LTACH Staff and education on common tubes and drains associated with NP patients

## ❖ Goals:

- ❖ Improve patient health outcomes



# Literature Review

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- ❖ Patients who are treated in an acute care inpatient setting with high medical needs and acuity, cannot return to their homes with HHC or nursing homes (Murkofsky & Alston, 2009).
- ❖ An analysis of surgical patients, LTACH care was associated with improved mortality and lower Medicare payments (Szubski et al., 2014).
- ❖ Abdominal surgical patient's return to normalcy through the implementation of evidence-based protocols, has produced positive patient outcomes (Velazco, Ghamande, & Surani, 2017).
- ❖ Due to poor management of complex wounds and multiple drains in home settings has led to increase in infection of surgical sites (intra-abdominal infection/abscess); and septicemia (Carter, 2009).
- ❖ Therefore, there is need to transition patients with high level of care to an institution that can accommodate their medical needs (Banks et al., 2012).

# Intervention and Implementation

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## ❖ Intervention:

- ❖ Two weeks of extensive education on understanding criteria for transferring patients to LTACH was presented to physicians, residents, nurse practitioners, nurses, clinical nurse specialists, case managers and social workers before implementation

## ❖ Implementation:

- ❖ Implementation of the transfer of abdominal surgical patients with necrotizing pancreatitis to LTACHs will be a method of promoting organized and efficient patient care that is based on the best-available evidence

# LTACH CRITERIA

Long term Acute Care Hospitals refers to care of medically complex or critically ill patient requiring 25 days or more

If our patients meet these criteria, let us advocate for transfer to LTACH, improve patients outcomes and reduce readmission rates

**Higher  
Acuity**

**Complex  
Drains/  
Wounds**

**Long term  
IV Fluids-  
Antibiotics,  
TPN**

**Medicare  
length of  
stay  
greater  
than 25  
days**

**Complex  
Surgeries**

Abdominal surgical patients with necrotizing pancreatitis who meet criteria to transition to LTACHs will be transferred for continuity of care to effectively manage high-acuity. This should improve outcomes and help reduce readmission rates



# Outcome Measures and Resources

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## ❖ Outcome Measures:

- ❖ The LTACHs admission criteria will be systematically used to assist clinicians in making decisions about appropriate health care for specific clinical circumstances and are used to reduce inappropriate variations in practice and to promote the delivery of high-quality health care

## ❖ Resources:

- ❖ AHEC Library

# Key Stakeholders and Timeline

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## ❖ Key Stakeholders:

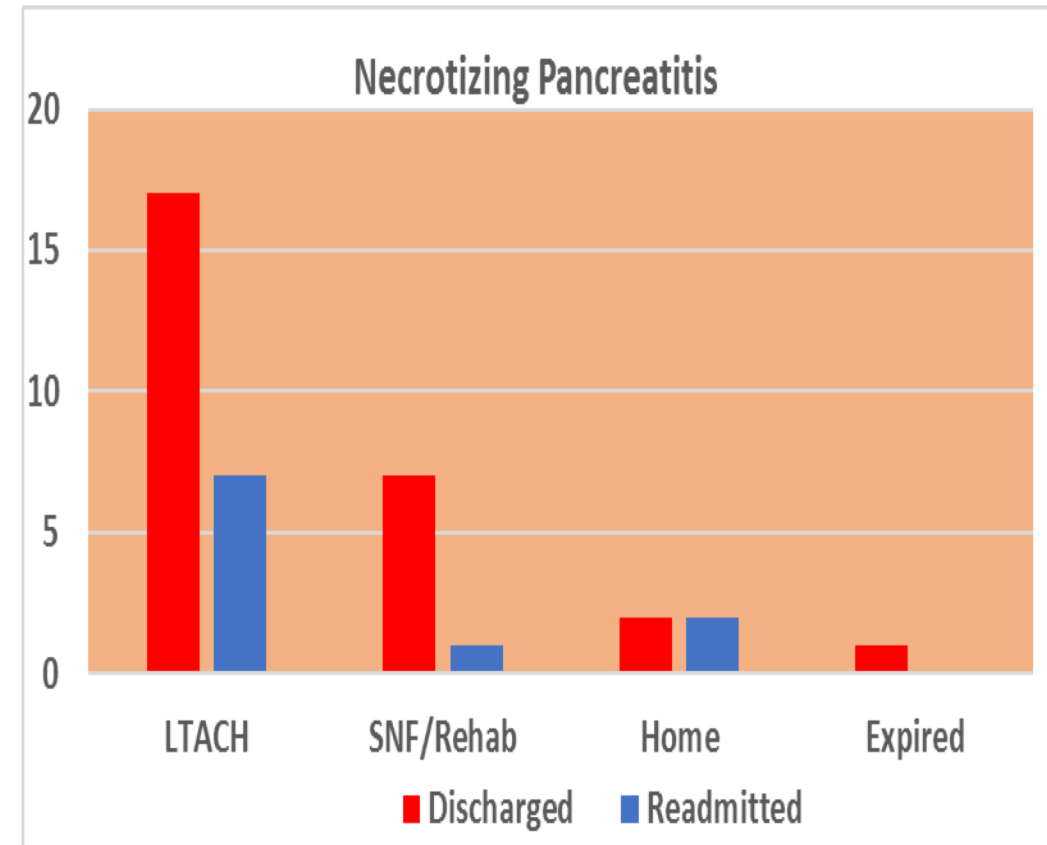
- ❖ Vice President of Surgical Division, Administrative Leadership and LTACHs Staff, Physicians, Residents, Nurse practitioners, Nurses, Clinical Nurse Specialists, Social workers, Case Managers and patients

## ❖ Timeline:

- ❖ Data collection initiated on January 30th, 2019
- ❖ Project implementation phase from January 31st, 2019 through April 30th, 2019
- ❖ Post implementation data collection completed April 30th, 2019

# Preliminary Results

Necrotizing Pancreatitis		
Facility	Discharged	Readmitted
LTACH	17	7
SNF/Rehab	7	1
Home	2	2
Expired	1	0



# Conclusion

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- ❖ Highly skilled clinicians, who comprise the inter-disciplinary team in an LTACH, work closely on a treatment plan that encompasses the patient's and family's goals for healing
- ❖ Unlike Home Health Care (HHC) and Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF), the care provided at an LTACH is driven by continued acute medical needs of the patient and the provision of high quality care to ensure successful clinical outcomes



# Questions

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# References

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